

therapeutic importance (Jour. A. M. A., April 15, 1916, p. 1199).

Piperazin, Lysidin, Lithium Carbonate, Sodium Bicarbonate and Sodium Citrate as Uric Acid Solvents.—H. D. Haskins has studied the uric acid solvent power of urine of persons taking the various substances classed as uric acid solvents. The investigation led to the following conclusions: 1.—Piperazin can cause the urine to dissolve more uric acid than it would without the drug, and this effect is most marked if sodium citrate or bicarbonate be also given and if diuresis be avoided. 2.—Lysidin can act as a uric acid solvent but is not a practical therapeutic agent because of the large doses required. 3.—Lithium carbonate is a uric acid solvent if large enough doses are used, but is unsafe and possesses no advantage over sodium citrate or bicarbonate. 4.—Sodium citrate and bicarbonate are reliable and satisfactory uric acid dissolving agents when given in such dosage as to keep the urine alkaline (The Archives of Internal Medicine, March 15, 1916, p. 405).

Prescribing of Narcotics.—The Harrison Antinarcotic law exempts from its operations ready-made mixtures containing specified small quantities of narcotics, but requires physicians' prescriptions containing small amounts of narcotics to be registered. The law should be made consistent by requiring the registration of all prescriptions containing narcotics in any amount. The inconsistency in the law should be removed prohibiting absolutely the sale, except on a physician's prescription, of preparations containing narcotics in any proportion. The continued uses of small doses of a narcotic drug is just as capable of establishing the habit as is the use of larger doses (Jour. A. M. A., April 8, 1916, p. 1158).

Why Glycerophosphates?—The glycerophosphates are split up in the intestines into ordinary phosphates and absorbed and utilized, if they are utilized at all. There is no evidence that glycerophosphates have any pharmacologic action to warrant the belief that they are of use as therapeutic agents. The belief in their value is kept alive by the promotion of certain proprietary mixtures. The glycerophosphates will be continued to be manufactured until physicians refuse to prescribe them. A manufacturer has even substituted glycerophosphates for the potent yellow phosphorus in his elixir of phosphorus, nux vomica and damiana and, so his chemist reports, physicians continue to prescribe the proprietary the composition of which has been altered (Jour. A. M. A., April 15, 1916, p. 1205).

A Much Needed Pharmacologic Investigation.—J. D. Pilcher, University of Nebraska College of Medicine, has investigated the action on the uterus of the guinea pig of a number of drugs which are widely used as ingredients of proprietary "female remedies," and which so far have been little, or not at all, studied. Blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*) showed a variable tonic effect. Pulsatilla (*Anemone pulsatilla* or *Pulsatilla pratensis*), unicorn root (*Aletris farinosa*), figwort (*scrophularia marylandica*), valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) were more or less depressant. The following drugs gave negative results: cramp bark (*Viburnum opulus*), black haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), swamp maple (*Acer spicatum*), false unicorn (*Chamaelirium luteum* or *Helonias dioica*), liferoot (*Senecio aureus*), wild yam (*Dioscorea villosa*), motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*), passion flower (*Passiflora incarnata*) and squaw vine (*Mitchella repens*). It is to be hoped that Pilcher's work will permit the formation of an opinion as to the therapeutic value of those drugs in which some degree of activity has been found (Jour. A. M. A., April 15, 1916, p. 1205).

Diarsenol.—Dr. E. H. Martin, Hot Springs, Ark., reports that, after giving several hundred doses of Diarsenol without any bad effects whatever, he had two cases in which nausea, vomiting and symp-

toms of apparent collapse such as have been previously reported by another writer. He found on investigation that the specimens which in his hands gave untoward results as well as those previously reported on and two further accidents were all due to a product bearing the same lot number (Jour. A. M. A., April 8, 1916, p. 1155).

Elixir Calcyates Compound.—Each dessertspoonful of this specialty is said to contain the "equivalent of" Calcyates (calcium and strontium disalicylate) 5 grains, resin of guaiac $\frac{1}{2}$ grain, powdered digitalis leaves $\frac{1}{4}$ grain, powdered squill $\frac{1}{4}$ grain, extract of colchicum seed $\frac{1}{4}$ grain, cascara 1-16 grain, aromatics. One or two dessertspoonfuls are to be taken three to four times a day. The mixture is to be given in cases of "rheumatism, lumbago, neuralgia, sciatica, etc." If a salicylate is indicated it should be given in sufficient amount in the form of sodium salicylate; the patient should not be given a preparation containing ingredients in the way of guaiac, squill and colchicum which are not needed. Digitalis is rarely indicated in inflammatory rheumatism and it should never be given in a multiple mixture (Jour. A. M. A., April 22, 1916, p. 1307).

Cactus Compound Pills.—A pharmaceutical firm makes Pills Cactus Compound (Heart Tonic) each of which is said to contain: "Cactus grandiflora $\frac{1}{2}$ gr., Sparteine sulphate 1-40 gr., Digitalin, pure (German) 1-125 gr., Strychnine sulphate 1-500 gr., Glonoin (nitroglycerin) 1-500 gr., Strophanthin 1-5000 gr." The combination is irrational and the dosage of the individual drugs, in most instances, absurdly small. Every one of the ingredients except digitalin may be disregarded either because of inertness or because of the small amount present, and the treatment then becomes one of digitalis. The selling name of "Cactus Compound" is a misnomer as the activity of the pill is that of the small dose of the digitalis glucoside. The pill is an illustration of how worthless drugs are perpetuated. At one time it was thought that cactus had therapeutic value. During that time many "specialties" and proprietaries bearing its name were put on the market. Although the drug is now known to be worthless, these specialties continue to be sold (Jour. A. M. A., April 29, 1916, p. 1387).

ANOTHER RAP AT THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

(From the Journal of Maine Medical Association.)

The following joint resolution has been introduced by Senator John D. Works, of California:

Whereas, The American Medical Association is a national organization of physicians and surgeons of one school of medicine only and intended to advance the personal and private interests of its members; and

Whereas, One of the objects of said Association actively and aggressively prosecuted is to procure legislation, state and national, in the interest of the school of medicine represented by it and against all others; and

Whereas, The Public Health Service of the United States is intended to represent all classes of people of all medical or non-medical beliefs in national and interstate affairs; and

Whereas, The surgeon general of the Public Health Service has been elected president of the said Association and other officers of the Service have become members thereof; and

Whereas, It is believed that the best interests of the Public Health Service and of the people require that its officials and employees be free from influence or control by any school of medicine, or mode of healing; now, therefore,

Resolved, That it shall be unlawful for any officer or employee of the Public Health Service of the government to be or become a member or officer of, or in any way connected with, any medical or private health association or organization of any kind.

Dr. Rupert Blue, surgeon general, is president-elect of the American Medical Association. This is purely an effort on the part of the medical profession of this country to honor Dr. Blue and to show our appreciation of the great work which he has done.

The Senator who introduces this resolution has opposed all efforts to improve the condition of the Public Health Service, and is an ardent advocate of Christian Science. This latter fact does not react in any way so far as the medical profession is concerned, as we are accustomed to take a man at his true value, and judge him only by his individual acts, as a citizen in his community.

These resolutions not only require the surgeon general, but all surgeons in the Public Health Service, to terminate their membership in the various medical societies. Probably no one factor has worked to greater advantage to the country as a whole as the affiliation of the Public Health Service working jointly with the American Medical Association and other such organizations. Outside of our cities the public health matters are left in the hands of some local physician and the community is dependent upon him. If you will read these resolutions carefully, they seem to have an element of justice in them, and it forces one to realize that the present age or generation demands a more exact and businesslike relationship between the physician and the public rather than the ethical one which has always dominated this body of men.

It is no longer possible to go before a legislative body or city government and secure the passage of ordinances or acts aimed towards the betterment of public health on the merits of the case alone. It is time that the medical profession should give more thought to these matters and endeavor to see them in their true light.

It has been stated by an eminent legislator that the physician can be the most powerful factor in his community, and, should he so desire, could control more votes than any man outside of politics. Whether this be true or not, it would seem advisable to talk these matters over with the members of our Legislature and Congress, and endeavor to give them the true aims of the medical profession.

DINING CARS.

The dining car department of the American railroad, one of the big elements in the luxury of passenger service, is a bigger institution than the average traveler imagines. An idea of its magnitude and importance may be gathered from figures gathered by Superintendent Allan Pollok of the Dining Car and Restaurant Department of the Southern Pacific.

"The Southern Pacific," says Mr. Pollok, "has 105 diners, 63 buffet cars, four cafe cars and one lunch car. Its dining car mileage last year was 10,832,847 and 3,207,353 persons were fed on the diners. We have 107 commissary employes, 824 car employes, 80 stewards, 327 cooks, 367 waiters and 52 porters. In equipment we use 65,625 pieces of silver, 131,797 napkins, 36,098 tablecloths, 19,425 pieces of glassware and 71,820 pieces of chinaware. On the diners we used last year 636,732 pounds of fresh meat, 189,804 pounds of poultry, 17,436 gallons of cream, 123,436 gallons of milk, 36,000 loaves of bread and 85,846 dozen eggs. On the steamers we served 1,101,015 meals, using 120,792 pounds of fresh meats, 1200 pounds of poultry, 1200 gallons of cream, 38,687 gallons of milk, 24,624 pounds of butter, 31,442 dozen eggs and 82,254 loaves of bread. Our fifteen restaurants, alone, served 1,612,293 meals.

All purchases for the department are made at headquarters on the tenth floor of the Flood building, San Francisco. Goods purchased in carloads are delivered to the general store at Kirkham street, West Oakland, where complete stock to the value of over \$100,000 is maintained, and

from there shipped, in small quantities, to the different points.

The chief commissaries are at West Oakland yards, Northern lines; Los Angeles, Southern lines; Ferry building, San Francisco, for steamers and ferries; Houston for the Sunset lines.

Other commissaries are situated at Third and Townsend streets, San Francisco; New Orleans, San Antonio, El Paso and Ogden.

The Los Angeles commissary is the latest—having been completed in June, 1914. It is without doubt the most convenient and complete one in the country.

The preserved fruits and vegetables are the best that money can buy. The butter is especially prepared for our service. Eggs are received from the farm at different points daily. All pies and rolls are baked either in our commissaries or in our cars. Cream is delivered in one-gallon, non-returnable tins. It is pasteurized and tested every morning at the commissary and once a week samples are sent to the University of California and there tested.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY.

The regular April meeting of the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement was called to order at 8:30 p. m. by President J. H. Parkinson.

Minutes of the past meeting read and approved.

Reports of cases:

Muscular Dystrophy (?) by F. F. Gundrum, M.D.

Fracture of Hip, by J. B. Harris, M.D.

Paper of the evening—Servian Experiences, by S. O. Beasley of San Francisco.

Report of delegates postponed until supper time.

Report of Committee on Formation of Medical Milk Commission made by Dr. E. W. Twitchell, chairman.

Recommended that committee be formed for the certification of milk which committee shall attend to proper details for establishing its own standing, state and national. This committee shall be appointed by the chair. Probably (1) tuberculin testing, (2) bacterial count, (3) scoring may be secured through state, county and city officers at no expense to the society. Dr. Twitchell, chairman. Moved and seconded report be received and recommendation concurred in; carried. Moved and seconded chair appoint committee as outlined by Medical Milk Committee, carried. Dr. Parkinson appointed Drs. E. W. Twitchell, chairman; J. W. James, T. J. Cox.

Drs. Phillip G. Young, Timothy Lyman and J. Wm. Crawford elected to membership.

Adjourned at 11:30.

F. F. GUNDRUM, M. D.,
Secretary-Treasurer.

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

The regular monthly meeting of the San Joaquin County Medical Society was held on Friday evening, April 28th, at the Chamber of Commerce quarters. Those present were Drs. F. P. Clark, E. A. Arthur, C. R. Harry, C. F. English, B. J. Powell, H. J. Bolinger, L. Dozier, J. T. Davison, W. F. Priestly, J. D. Dameron, R. T. McGurk, J. V. Craviotto, B. F. Walker, S. E. D. Pinniger, Margaret Smyth, Minerva Goodman, W. J. Backus, H. E. Sanderson and D. R. Powell with Dr. S. O. Beasley of San Francisco as guest of the evening and about forty invited guests from the training schools of the various hospitals and ladies of the Red Cross.

President Clark called the meeting to order at 9 p. m. and introduced Dr. Beasley, who had but recently returned from six months' service with one of the American Red Cross units in Belgrade, Servia. Dr. Beasley gave a wonderfully interesting talk upon first hand experiences in the war-stricken country, dealing particularly with the hospital service in handling the wounded and thousands of the typhus cases.

At the close of Dr. Beasley's talk, the president